

HIGHWAY INFORMATION QUARTERLY


U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

VOL. 7, NO. 2

June 2000

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION • OFFICE OF HIGHWAY POLICY INFORMATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. (202) 366-0180
Web Site: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim>

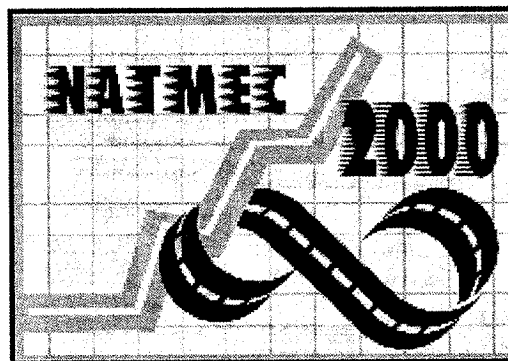
NATMEC 2000

Applying Traffic Data— Moving Forward Together

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) will host the North American Travel Monitoring Exhibition and Conference (NATMEC 2000) on August, 27-31, 2000, in Madison, Wisconsin. For the first time, the Transportation Research Board Data Committees will meet with NATMEC for a joint conference that will include formal presentations, panel discussions, vendor displays and demonstrations, and informal gatherings on all types of traffic data.

Keynote speakers will be U. S. Representative Tom Petri, Vice-Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Dean Carlson, Secretary of Transportation for the Kansas DOT and former Federal Highway Administration Executive Director; and Larry English, President and Principal of Information Impact International, Inc., of Brentwood, Tennessee.

There will be more than 100 presentations in general sessions, concurrent sessions, and an exhibition. The conference will focus on traffic data quality and the rising expectations of traffic data users. New technologies and data from intelligent transportation systems (ITS) will be covered in detail.



To review the preliminary program and updates or register online, go to the NATMEC Web site at www.cae.wisc.edu/~natmec/. For additional information, contact Paul Stein of the Wisconsin DOT at telephone (608) 266-8678.

Figure 1



U.S. Representative
Tom Petri

Figure 2



Larry English

Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) News Briefs

Check It Out!!! The HPMS Web site contains useful information on the HPMS program. In addition to a current version of the HPMS Field Manual, the site contains a list of frequently asked questions and answers, a list of related HPMS publications, and references to several important resource documents. Log on to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim>.

Three resource documents of particular interest are:

1. **Improving HPMS Data Quality**—"Plain English on Data Quality: Seven Deadly Misconceptions," by Larry P. English. This article describes misconceptions about information quality that can cause quality initiatives to fail or appear to succeed but fail to achieve desired results. Published in June, July, and September 1999 by *DM Review*, the document can be found at www.dmreview.com.
2. **HPMS and Air Quality**—*Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled—Statutory Language*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1999. This document provides excerpted statutory language relevant to requirements for vehicle miles of travel (VMT) data to meet National Ambient Air Quality

Standards (NAAQS) and other clean air legislation and goals. The document can be provided electronically upon request; please contact jim.getzewich@fhwa.dot.gov.

3. **International Roughness Index Data for HPMS**—*Better Data Needed to Rate the Nation's Highway Conditions*, General Accounting Office (GAO), 1999. (GAO/RCED 99-264). This document provides a GAO assessment of the consistency and accuracy of IRI data reported to the HPMS by the States, including recommendations that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and States adopt the American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) protocols for collecting and reporting IRI data. The document is available at the GAO Web site; <http://www.gao.gov>.

The FHWA is still trying to build a State HPMS contacts list; however, only a few of our State HPMS contacts have responded with permission to list their names on a State contact Web site. If you wish to be listed as a State HPMS contact, please send an E-mail to beverly.harrison@fhwa.dot.gov. Be sure to include how you want your listing shown—name, phone, Internet address.

AASHTO SCOP Briefed on Highway Finance Reassessment

Barna Juhasz, Director of FHWA's Office of Highway Policy Information, addressed FHWA's highway finance reassessment at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standing Committee on Planning (SCOP) Spring meeting which was held on March 24 in Orange Beach, Alabama.

This key data series, which includes the nearly \$120 billion annually in Federal, State, and local income and spending, is being reassessed to ensure that the data series is set in its contemporary context. The presentation focused on several main points:

- The purpose of the highway finance reassessment;
- The current "state-of-the-practice" of the highway finance data programs;
- FHWA's goals for the highway finance data programs;
- The importance of and FHWA's need for feedback from the States and local governments on these data;
- FHWA's desire to partner with AASHTO on this effort.

Mr. Juhasz discussed overall data management themes, and cited some concepts from the article, "Plain English on Data Quality: Seven Deadly Misconceptions," by Larry P. English (*DM Review* 1999). The reassessment was well received.

(continued on Page 3)

AASHTO SCOP Briefed on Highway Finance Reassessment, *(continued from Page 2)*

SCOP members suggested that the highway finance reassessment follow the pattern of the recent Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) reassessment, and strongly urged FHWA to do a better job in educating States and others in the various uses of these highway finance data.

FHWA continued its outreach to the States at the AASHTO Executive Meeting in St. George, Utah (April 2000) and with the Financial Management Subcommittee in Biloxi, Mississippi in May 2000. For additional information, contact either Tom Howard at (202) 366-0170, E-mail tom.howard@fhwa.dot.gov or Tom Benedict, telephone (202) 366-5025, E-mail tom.benedict@fhwa.dot.gov.

Highway Funding Bulletin Released

The Office of Highway Policy Information recently released its annual bulletin, Highway Funding 1997-2000. This bulletin portrays a "snapshot" of highway revenues and disbursements by all units of government. Total disbursements are expected to reach nearly \$120 billion in 2000, an increase of 17.6 percent over 1997's figure.

Total anticipated year 2000 highway-user revenues of \$101.8 billion (motor fuel, motor vehicle taxes, fees, and tolls) would fund about 85 percent of all highway disbursements. The difference between disbursements and highway-user revenue results from some highway-user revenues going to nonhighway purposes, and non-user revenues being applied for highway purposes.

Capital expenditures are expected to increase in 2000 to about \$58.1 billion, an increase of 20 percent over 1997's figure.

State governments will be responsible for approximately 76 percent of the total expenditures,

with capital expenditures of \$44.1 billion. If current trends continue, 28 percent of the State government capital expenditures will be used for projects on the Interstate System, and 41 percent on other principal arterials. An additional 21 percent will be for projects on other arterial and collectors, while 10 percent will be used for local roads. Of the amount expended by States on all arterials and collectors, 16 percent is expected to be used for new roads and bridges, 31 percent for other capacity improvements, 45 percent for system preservation, and 8 percent for operational and safety-related improvements.

Total funding for highways, including receipts, intergovernmental payments, and disbursements for the years 1996 through 2000, is included in the Highway Funding Bulletin. The Bulletin can be accessed on the OHPI's Web site www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim under "Products and Publications," and "What's New." For additional information, call (202) 366-0170.

Projected Highway Expenditures for 2000

Figure 3

	Billions	Percent
Highway Capital Outlay	\$ 58.1	48.4
Highway Maintenance/Operation	30.9	25.8
Administration and Research	9.4	7.8
Law Enforcement and Safety	11.1	9.3
Interest	4.8	4.0
Bond Retirements	5.6	4.7
Total	\$ 119.9	100

Office of Highway Policy Information (OHPI) Releases New Guide

The revised Guide to Reporting Highway Statistics (OMB control number 2125-0032) is now available at OHPI's Web site www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/ohimstat.htm. This Guide, which provides procedures for preparing various highway statistical data series submitted by the States to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), supersedes the 1997 version.

In general, most of the changes are minor and should clarify existing instructions and ease the burden on the State data provider; however, several changes are more significant and include:

- **Motor-fuel changes**—This Guide reflects some revisions to this data series, including clarifications on the reporting of audit results, International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) adjustments, Native American Reservations, and other issues. The FHWA and its partners are currently reassessing

the motor-fuel data series and attribution process. If changes for data years after data year 2000 are made to these instructions, they will be distributed separately.

- **Highway finance changes**—The most significant changes involve FHWA Form-534, "State Highway Capital Outlay and Maintenance Expenditures." Some additional improvement type details, as well as an additional area type (population more than 200,000), are being added to the form. This data series is also being reevaluated by FHWA, and if changes for data years after data year 2000 are made to these instructions, they, too, will be distributed separately.

The printed version of the revised Guide is scheduled for distribution in the Spring. For additional information, contact Tom Howard, (202)366-0170, E-mail tom.howard@fhwa.dot.gov.

Motor-Fuel Workshops Draw Strong Response

FHWA's Office of Highway Policy Information (OHPI) recently sponsored motor-fuel reporting workshops in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (January 27, 2000) and Denver, Colorado (February 24, 2000). Braving a storm that hit parts of the Mid-Atlantic and the North East, about 25 State revenue and transportation staff and others attended the Philadelphia meeting, and about 50 participants attended the Denver meeting.

At both meetings, participants were greeted by the host State FHWA Division Administrator. Presentations by Tom Howard, Chief of the Highway Funding and Motor Fuels Division, and staff members, Ralph Erickson and Marsha Reynolds, addressed various reporting issues and possible changes in motor-fuel reporting. Motor-fuel and motor-fuel based highway trust fund receipts are major TEA-21 formula factors. About \$11.2 billion annually in Federal funds rely on motor-fuel.

These workshops were held as a mechanism for sharing information with the States and others on the FHWA/American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)/Federation of Tax Administrators motor-fuel reassessment. This effort, which has been underway for about a year and one-half, is being chaired by Nicholas Graf, FHWA's North Carolina Division Administrator.

Proposed changes resulting from the reassessment will be published for comment later this year. A meeting open to the States and others may be held during the comment period.

For additional information on this subject, contact Ralph Erickson, (202) 366-0235, E-mail ralph.erickson@fhwa.dot.gov, or Marsha Reynolds, (202) 366-5029, E-mail marsha.reynolds@fhwa.dot.gov.

Technical Assistance and Training

David Jones of the Office of Highway Policy Information's (OHPI) Travel Monitoring Division conducted a workshop on the Vehicle Travel Information System (VTRIS) in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 27-28, 2000. The VTRIS software validates, edits, summarizes, and generates reports on vehicle classification, vehicle weight, and axle spacing.

Seven Georgia DOT personnel and one FHWA Georgia Division Office representative attended the workshop. This hands-on workshop introduced them to the software, which is used by many States and FHWA to process vehicle classification and truck weight data. By using VTRIS, the States are able to develop data addressing a wide variety of issues such as pavement

design and heavy-vehicle policy analysis in a cost-effective and timely manner. Also, VTRIS will help make data processing more efficient and accurate, and will allow for the dissemination of information on a national basis that is more reliable and timely for multiple purposes throughout the agency. Advice received during this workshop will help make the system more user-friendly. The high level of interest displayed by the States in this system is encouraging and reflects a true partnership.

A VTRIS workshop is also conducted in conjunction with the annual Highway Information Seminar; this year's workshop will be held on November 13. To schedule a workshop, contact David L. Jones at (202) 366-5053 or E-mail david.l.jones@fhwa.dot.gov.

The 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) Training CD-ROM with Enhanced Data CD-ROM is Now Available

This dual CD-ROM packet contains two CD-ROMs, which are the revised and value-added 1995 NPTS data CD-ROM, and the NPTS Training Module CD-ROM. The 1995 NPTS Data CD-ROM contains the complete data set from the survey, with value added data from the originally released data set. The 1995 NPTS Training CD-ROM provides a fast-track introduction and tutorial for the 1995 NPTS.

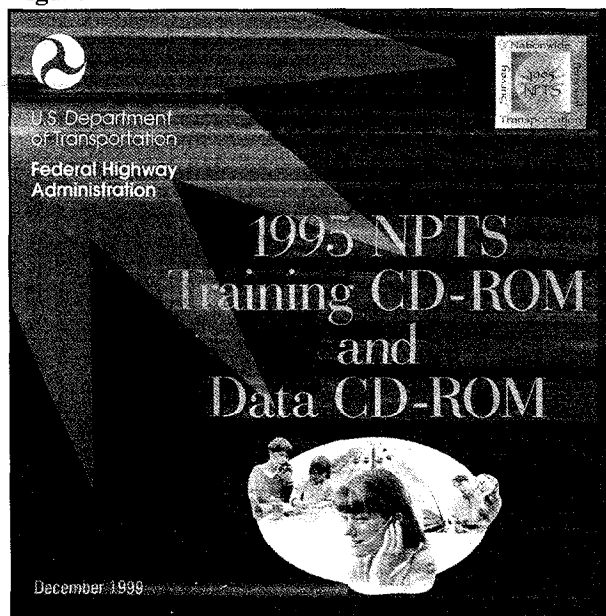
Items addressed are:

- Introduction providing information about the purposes and use of the NPTS;
- Data collection and its importance;
- Data files and the structures of these six different files;
- The use and description of weighted and unweighted data;
- Analysis which provides examples showing how to mine the data set using a variety of software packages as well as the web-based analysis engine.

This data and training module can also be found and used on-line at: <http://www.cta.ornl.gov/npts>.

Mailings have already been made to those who previously requested copies. To order a copy of the dual CD-ROM pack, contact Millie Wilson, telephone (202) 366-0160, or E-mail millie.wilson@fhwa.dot.gov.

Figure 4



Customer Feedback

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Office of Highway Policy Information is making a special effort to meet customer requirements for local highway finance data. While FHWA's Highway Statistics report currently contains local finance data aggregated at the State level (LF series), customer feedback indicates a need for local highway finance data that exceeds our current reporting capabilities. Data requests may include questions about financing within a county, city, township, metropolitan planning organization, or other sub-state entity.

As part of its overall highway finance reassessment (see article on page 2 entitled "AASHTO SCOP Briefed on Highway Finance Reassessment"), FHWA is making an effort to meet these data user needs. Included in the effort is a review of the Census Bureau's Census of Governments—1997 (to be released this summer), university research, and other sources of local highway finance data.

For more information on this subject, please contact Lenny Goldberg, telephone (202) 366 5024, or E-mail lenny.goldberg@fhwa.dot.gov.

UPCOMING EVENT

Highway Information Seminar and VTRIS Workshop

The Office of Highway Policy Information's annual Highway Information Seminar will be held November 14-16, 2000, at the Holiday Inn Capitol, in Washington, D.C. This 3-day seminar of lectures, panel discussions, and workshops, will be targeted at persons who are new to their positions and are involved in collecting, analyzing, preparing, and submitting highway statistical data. This seminar is not intended to be an update or refresher course to previous ones, and priority will be given to those persons who have not attended before. The seminar also provides an opportunity for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and State personnel to meet their counterparts, exchange information, discuss individual problem areas, and recommend solutions.

On Monday, November 13, a Vehicle Travel Information System (VTRIS) workshop is planned at the DOT Headquarters building diagonally across the street from the hotel. VTRIS is a database management system for processing vehicle classification and truck weight data prior to submittal to FHWA. New this year will be a discussion of the Traffic Volume Trends (TVT) and reporting system. This workshop has been well received by previous participants in the past.

A request for nominees will be sent to FHWA field offices about the first week in July. Please direct questions concerning the seminar and VTRIS workshop to David Jones, Course Coordinator, at (202) 366-5053, or E-mail david.l.jones@fhwa.dot.gov.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Publication No. FHWA-PL-00-013
HPPI-30/6-00(1.5M)E

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

